

HARPERS MAGAZINE

Beginning in this issue

STEPHEN LEACOCK'S
New Nonsense Novels

PHILIP GIBBS
Ideals and Disillusions

ROBERT FROST
A New Group of Poems

By the author of
"North of Boston"

**In the Sacred City
of Buddha**

By **ROY CHAPMAN ANDREWS**

Price 40 cents

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A GROUP OF POEMS

BY ROBERT FROST

After being almost unheard for two years,^x Robert Frost is speaking again, in the old strain that will be unmistakable to readers of his "North of Boston." But Mr. Frost has not really been silent during this period. He has been producing more work of the type that has made him regarded on both sides of the ocean as one of the authentic voices of American literature. In the group of new poems which he here presents the broad range of his work is represented—as Mr. Frost himself puts it, "big bear, little bear, and middle-sized bear."

FRAGMENTARY BLUE

WHY make so much of fragmentary blue
In here and there a bird or butterfly,
Or flower, or wearing-stone, or open eye,
When heaven presents in sheets the solid hue?

Since earth is earth, perhaps, not heaven (as yet)—
Though some savants make earth include the sky,
And blue so far above us comes so high,
It only gives our wish for blue a whet.

PLACE FOR A THIRD

NOTHING to say to all those marriages!
She had made three herself to three of his.
The score was even for them, three to three.
But come to die she found she cared so much:
She thought of children in a burial row;
Three children in a burial row were sad.
One man's three women in a burial row—
Somehow made her impatient with the man.

^x Sounds like a revival. R. F.

And so she said to Laban, "You have done
A good deal right: don't do the last thing wrong.
Don't make me lie with those two other women."

Laban said, No, he would not make her lie
With any one but that she had a mind to.
If that was how she felt, of course, he said.
She went her way. But Laban having caught
This glimpse of lingering person in Eliza,
And anxious to make all he could of it
With something he remembered in himself,
Tried to think how he could exceed his promise,
And give good measure to the dead, though thankless.
If that was how she felt, he kept repeating.
His first thought under pressure was a grave
In a new boughten grave plot by herself,
Under he didn't care how great a stone:
He'd sell a yoke of steers to pay for it.
And weren't there special cemetery flowers,
That once grief-sets to growing, grief may rest:
The flowers will go on with grief awhile,
And no one seem neglecting or neglected?
A prudent grief will not despise such aids.
He thought of evergreen and everlasting.
And then he had a thought worth many of these.
Somewhere must be the grave of the young boy
Who married her for playmate more than helpmate,
And sometimes laughed at what it was between them.
How would she like to sleep her last with him?
Where was his grave? Did Laban know his name?

He found the grave a town or two away,
The headstone cut with John, Beloved Husband,
Beside it room reserved, the say a sister's,
A never-married sister's of that husband,
Whether Eliza would be welcome there.
The dead was bound to silence: ask the sister.
So Laban saw the sister, and, saying nothing
Of where Eliza wanted *not* to lie,
And who had thought to lay her with her first love,
Begged simply for the grave. The sister's face
Fell all in wrinkles of responsibility.
She wanted to do right. She'd have to think.

Laban was old and poor, yet seemed to care;
 And she was old and poor—but she cared, too.
 They sat. She cast one dull, old look at him,
 Then turned him out to go on other errands
 She said he might attend to in the village,
 While she made up her mind how much she cared—
 And how much Laban cared—and why he cared
 (She made shrewd eyes to see where he came in).

She'd looked Eliza up her second time,
 A widow at her second husband's grave,
 And offered her a home to rest awhile
 Before she went the poor man's widow's way,
 Housekeeping for the next man out of wedlock.
 She and Eliza had been friends through all.
 Who was she to judge marriage in a world
 Whose Bible's so confused up in marriage counsel?
 The sister had not come across this Laban;
 A decent product of life's ironing-out;
 She must not keep him waiting. Time would press
 Between the death day and the funeral day.
 So when she saw him coming in the street
 She hurried her decision to be ready
 To meet him with his answer at the door.
 Laban had known about what it would be
 From the way she had set her poor old mouth,
 To do, as she had put it, what was right.

She gave it through the screen door closed between them:
 "No, not with John. There wouldn't be no sense.
 Eliza's had too many other men."

Laban was forced to fall back on his plan
 To buy Eliza a plot to lie alone in:
 Which gives him for himself a choice of lots
 When his time comes to die and settle down.

GOOD-BY AND KEEP COLD

THIS saying good-by on the edge of the dark
 And cold to an orchard so young in the bark
 Reminds me of all that can happen to harm
 An orchard away at the end of the farm

All winter, cut off by a hill from the house.
 I don't want it girdled by rabbit and mouse,
 I don't want it dreamily nibbled for browse
 By deer, and I don't want it budded by grouse.
 (If certain it wouldn't be idle to call
 I'd summon grouse, rabbit, and deer to the wall
 And warn them away with a stick for a gun.)
 I don't want it stirred by the heat of the sun.
 (We made it secure against being, I hope,
 By setting it out on a northerly slope.)
 No orchard's the worse for the wintriest storm;
 But one thing about it, it mustn't get warm.
 "How often already you've had to be told,
 Keep cold, young orchard. Good-by and keep cold.
 Dread fifty above more than fifty below."
 I have to be gone for a season or so.
 My business awhile is with different trees,
 Less carefully nurtured, less fruitful than these,
 And such as is done to their wood with an ax—
 Maples and birches and tamaracks.
 I wish I could promise to lie in the night
 And think of an orchard's arboreal plight
 When slowly (and nobody comes with a light)
 Its heart sinks lower under the sod.
 But something has to be left to God.

FOR ONCE, THEN, SOMETHING

OTHERS taunt me with having knelt at well-curbs
 Always wrong to the light, so never seeing
 Deeper down in the well than where the water
 Gives me back in a shining surface picture
 Me myself in the summer heaven godlike,
 Looking out of a wreath of fern and cloud puffs.
 Once, when trying with chin against a well-curb,
 I discerned, as I thought, beyond the picture,
 Through the picture, a something white, uncertain,
 Something more of the depths—and then I lost it.
 Water came to rebuke the too clear water.
 One drop fell from a fern, and lo, a ripple
 Shook whatever it was lay there at bottom,
 Blurred it, blotted it out. What was that whiteness?
 Truth? A pebble of quartz? For once, then, something.

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